

Determining Meal Program Eligibility

Application Review

All DCPS Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) applications go through at least two levels of review prior to being processed.

- 1. School FARM Liaison:** Typically a school Business Manager or Registrar, this individual instructs parents or guardians on how to complete a FARM application, receives completed FARM applications from parents or guardians, inspects applications for errors or missing information, and transmits all applications meeting requirements to the DCPS FARM Determining Official. School liaisons receive annual training from the DCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) on how to complete a FARM application and what information is necessary for FARM processing.
- 2. Determining Official:** A member of DCPS OFNS' staff, the Determining Official receives FARM applications from school FARM liaisons, reviews applications for sufficiency, inputs all data into WebSMARTT, DCPS' point of sale software, uses the software to make determinations of eligibility, and informs parents or guardians of the determination via a letter. The determining official receives annual training either directly from DC OSSE or from the Compliance lead who attended the OSSE training.
- 3. Confirming Official:** A member of DCPS OFNS' staff distinct from the Determining Official, the Confirming Official confirms the accuracy of eligibility determinations for those applications selected for verification prior to verification.

Application Processing

DCPS OFNS has three methods for processing FARM applications tied to its point of sale software and data repository, WebSMARTT. WebSMARTT is updated annually with current income eligibility data.

- 1. Scanning:** Paper applications received are scanned. The data is read electronically by Teleform software and uploaded into WebSMARTT's application processing system. Uploaded data is verified for accuracy by the Determining Official. If specific data is not read by the software, the Determining Official will update the information in WebSMARTT manually. If data on the application is illegible, the Determining Official will verify the information over the phone with the parent or guardian.

Following the data upload, the WebSMARTT software determines program eligibility. A letter is generated from WebSMARTT notifying parents or guardians of the determination of eligibility and mailed. Original applications are dated and initialed by the Determining Official. The eligibility type is noted on the application. Approved applications are maintained on file for the federally required reporting period.

2. **Manual Input:** If the scan system is non-functional, DCPS will input the data manually from the application into WebSMARTT. If some data is illegible, the Determining Official will verify the information over the phone with the parent or guardian.

Following the data upload, the WebSMARTT software determines program eligibility. A letter is generated from WebSMARTT notifying parents or guardians of the determination of eligibility and mailed. Original applications are dated and initialed by the Determining Official. The eligibility type is noted on the application. Approved applications are maintained on file for the federally required reporting period.

3. **E-Form:** DCPS maintains an electronic FARM application available to parents or guardians on the DCPS website. To process e-forms, the DCPS Determining Official accesses the application through Liquid Office software. The data is verified using an electronic error check. Error free applications are approved by the Determining Official electronically and then uploaded into WebSMARTT.

Following the data upload, the WebSMARTT software determines program eligibility. A letter is generated from WebSMARTT notifying parents or guardians of the determination of eligibility and mailed. Approved applications are maintained electronically for the federally required reporting period.